

(TMI Journeys – July 2019)

## **NEAR DEATH AT 16**

*by Barbara A. Watts*



*The popularity of the NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE INTENSIVE program at TMI is a testament to the instinctive draw many of us feel toward perceiving life beyond the body. When we asked near-death experiencers to share their stories, we were amazed at the range, depth, and life-changing natures of the experiences. Barbara Watts's account puts into context the extreme shift of perspective on life, death, and life after life that is a gift of an NDE.*

My near-death experience occurred in the operating room after multiple complications from a simple appendectomy when I was sixteen years old. I remember every single minute of it to this day. This is my experience.

My condition was critical during this third and lengthy hospitalization following the appendectomy. Finally, a surgeon determined that I had an obstruction in my lower GI tract. Surgery was scheduled immediately. I fully remember being wheeled into the OR late one night for an exploratory procedure on my abdomen to correct the obstruction. As the surgery got underway, leaving my body on the table, I floated to the brilliant ceiling where I read the wattage on the lights and even saw dust on the light fixtures. Everyone knows, in an OR, this is not acceptable.

As I looked down on my body, the surgeon and anesthetist were talking in an animated manner and I heard the words, "We are losing her." Meanwhile, I was leaving the ceiling and heading in the direction of a long hallway. I did not encounter anyone in the hallway I knew but certainly felt and saw the crowd that had gathered there. It was like a warm, welcoming committee and I wanted to be part of the gathering. I still see those faces.

I had not gone far when all of a sudden I was pulled back to my body with a hard "thunk."

Years later, I requested my medical records only to find absolute confirmation of the words I had heard as they were recorded by the surgeon in the operative report.

My life and my belief system changed significantly after the confirmation of my NDE. I have become a nurse, a Reiki Master, and an ordained Certified Celebrant. I spent eighteen years as a hospice nurse learning so much from patients who had one foot in this world and one foot in the other world. It just felt not only right but also normal. My exploration of the Metaphysical Church has taken me places and allowed experiences otherwise not possible in my once very narrow and shallow mind.

I learned of Robert Monroe years ago, just before I went to a lecture by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and got the opportunity to meet her in 1985 or so. I had begun reading the works of Robert Monroe and followed the journey of EKR and the out-of-body experiences in which she had interest.

My 18 years as a hospice nurse were influenced by her work. I was always a champion for any AIDS patient.

As I write this, I feel a presence on my right shoulder encouraging me to tell this story. The oneness of the Universe enfolds me every single day.

*Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross experienced her first—and deeply transforming—OBE at Bob Monroe's Whistlefield Lab, precursor to the TMI lab. Her experience flung her life and career into an entirely new trajectory, leading to her first mystical experience, her founding of Shanti Nilaya, and a lifelong friendship with Bob. In an interview with Cosmopolitan Magazine, Kübler-Ross shared intimately about that event. At that time, Kübler-Ross, a Swiss-American psychiatrist, was already internationally lauded for her 1969 book On Death and Dying, which was inspired by her work with terminally ill patients.*